

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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EASLEY ANNOUNCES \$200,000 GRANT FOR NEW CENTURY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today announced a \$200,000 grant for the New Century Scholars program from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The program will provide the assistance and support needed to create greater access to post secondary educational opportunities for students in Western North Carolina.

“The New Century Scholars program gives students of all educational levels and backgrounds the personal, academic and financial assistance necessary to become productive citizens,” said Easley. “The program sends students to colleges where they will learn the skills that they need to join the workforce. This program will help further our education and economic development goals in North Carolina.”

The New Century Scholars Program was developed by Southwestern Community College (SCC) and currently operates in Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties. It is a partnership among SCC, Jackson, Macon and Swain county school systems, Western Carolina University, and the civic and business communities in the three counties.

The private partners pledge scholarship funding which is offered to selected rising 7th graders who, with their parents’ involvement, agree to maintain academic and behavioral standards throughout the rest of their public school career. If they meet these conditions, the students have a guaranteed last-dollar scholarship at SCC. For those students who wish to continue their education and obtain a four-year degree after successfully completing work at SCC, Western Carolina University has pledged to provide a scholarship.

The Governor’s Office will work with SCC to replicate and expand this program in other parts of Western North Carolina. Over the next 18 months, the project staff will lay the foundation for and build new partnerships among community colleges, four-year institutions, the public schools and the business community in order to offer the program to students in additional areas of the region. The Governor’s New Century Scholars Program expects to bring new partnerships on board this spring and select new classes of 7th grade scholars to begin next fall.

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